(b) to (d) Do not arise.

VRS for civil servants

1110. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a proposal has been formulated to provide for voluntary retirement system for senior civil servants, based on mid-career screening, as part of the continuing administrative reforms in the Central services;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the present status of its implementation; and

(c) the details of other such schemes/measures being implemented for a more responsive and efficient administrative set up in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) No specific proposal is at present under consideration of the Government.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Provisions exist under Fundamental Rule 56(j) and Rule 48 of the CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972 for premature retirement of Government servants in public interest with a view to improving efficiency and strengthening administrative set up at all levels.

Revision of pay scale

†1111. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to revise the pay scales of Section Officers and Assistants belonging to Central Secretariat Service;

(b) if so, the action taken by Government in this regard so far;

(c) whether the Minister of Finance has declined to accede to it despite instructions from P.M. Office in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) Yes, Sir.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) The matter is being examined in consultation with the Ministry of Finance.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

BPL population

1112. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the actual figure of Indians still languishing Below Poverty Line, State-wise;

(b) the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps to be taken by Government to improve the situation in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) The Planning Commission estimates poverty for the years for which NSS data on large sample surveys are available. The latest such data is available for the year 1999-2000 (55th Round). According to the estimates based on the above survey, 26.02 crores of people were living below the poverty line in the country during 1999-2000. The State-wise number and percentage of population living below the poverty line during 1999-2000 is given at Statement (*See* below).

(b) The reasons for continued incidence of poverty may be attributed to the frictions and rigidities in the Indian Economy that make poverty reducing effect of growth less effective. On account of unequal agricultural development, slow growth of those sectors where employment opportunities could have been created, the benefits of growth have not trickled down uniformly among different sections and classes of people.

(c) The government has adopted a three pronged strategy for reducing poverty: (i) acceleration of economic growth with a focus on sectors which are employment intensive; (ii) human and social development through provision of basic minimum services; and (iii) targeted anti-poverty programmes.

In rural areas, the programmes which are being implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development for upliftment of BPL families are (i) Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), (ii) Swaranjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), (iii) Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), and (iv) National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.